

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 1975

Office of the White House Press Secretary

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THE WHITE HOUSE

NATIONAL SAINT ELIZABETH SETON DAY

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BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Among the most important elements of America's Bicentennial observance -- and of everyday American life for nearly 200 years -- is the religious heritage of our Nation, rich in its diversity and its quality.

The singular devotion, faith and courage of such servants of God as Elizabeth Ann Seton give life to that heritage and inspiration to us all.

On Sunday, September 14, 1975, His Holiness Pope Paul VI will confer upon "Mother Seton," as she is known to millions of Roman Catholics, the rites of canonization. From that day, Mother Seton will be Saint Elizabeth Seton, the first American-born saint of the Roman Catholic Church.

Born in New York more than 200 years ago, Mother Seton was content in her early years to live the common life of the 18th century woman. But tragedy entered her life, leaving her a widow at a young age and with five children. Moving to Emmitsburg, Maryland, she turned to the work of her church, took the vows of a nun and later founded the Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph, an order of nuns devoted to teaching.

Mother Seton established the first parochial school in America, the foundation for an educational system that has brought the priceless gift of knowledge to millions of Americans, including a multitude of newly arrived immigrants whom Mother Seton and her followers instructed in the language and the ways of their new homeland.

For her devout faith and diligent service in the Kingdom of God, her church is bestowing its highest honor on Mother Seton on September 14, 1975.

For her service to her country, we, as a Nation, and believers in many faiths, also have just cause to honor the memory of Mother Seton on that special day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GERALD R. FORD, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Senate Joint Resolution 125, do hereby designate Sunday, September 14, 1975, as National Saint Elizabeth Seton Day, and call for such memorials and other observances as are appropriate to the occasion.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this eleventh day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred seventy-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two-hundredth.

GERALD R. FORD

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